

THE SOUL *of the*
APOSTOLATE

THE SOUL *of the* APOSTOLATE

DOM JEAN-BAPTISTE CHAUTARD, OCSO
(Abbot of Notre Dame de Sept-Fons)

Translated by
A MONK OF OUR LADY OF GETHSEMANI

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DOM CHAUTARD

A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

It is surely significant that the day on which the author of this modern spiritual classic, the *Soul of the Apostolate*, was born in the French Alps, was the feast of St. Gregory the Great, March 12, 1858. For it is one of the cardinal principles of St. Gregory's mystical and ascetical teaching that there exists an inseparably close relation between the so-called "active" and "contemplative" lives, so much so that though one may dominate over the other (and the most perfect state is that in which contemplation dominates) yet in the soul of anyone called by God to high sanctity the life is always essentially a mixture of contemplation (love of God) and action (love of neighbor).

Now it is precisely this problem which the brilliant and ardent Cistercian abbot of Sept-Fons, in central France sets himself to elucidate and discuss in this pamphlet, which has gone into many editions and hundreds of thousands of copies in many languages, and which was the bedside book of Pope Pius X. The reason why St. Gregory the Great was so perfect in expounding the relation of action and contemplation is that, called from the cloister to the Papacy in one of the crises in the history of the Church, he found out what that relation was in the crucible of trial and labor and distraction and struggle.

And the reason why Dom Chautard has been able to write so well on the same theme for our own age, intoxicated with the confusion of its own sterile and purely worldly activities, is that he too was so often torn, by the hand of God, from the cloister, and made an instrument of Divine Power and Providence and Love to protect the monks and nuns of the Cistercian Order, and to call priests, religious, and layworkers in Catholic Action to a life of closer union with God, in Whom is the only principle of vital and effective social action: divine charity, won for us by the Sacrifice of Christ, His Incarnate Word, upon the Cross.

The Chautards ran a little bookshop, and the father of the future monk was one of those purely nominal Catholics who sometimes go to Mass, but whose principles are entirely vitiated by the materialistic and utilitarian views of the middle class to which they belong. The mother was in a different category. She had more faith, and she saw to it that her children were educated as Catholics.

However, as their son grew into young manhood, neither he nor they had an idea of his entering religion. He went to Marseilles to study economics at the university, with a commercial career in mind. There was a relative in Chile. Perhaps the young man would join him and make a fortune there. The atmosphere of the University of Marseilles was scarcely Catholic, but in a footnote to one of the later sections of the *Soul of the Apostolate*, the author tells us how he was one day much affected by the simple devotion with which a priest was reciting his Breviary, and he began to ask himself why he did not pray more himself.

Soon he began to frequent a Catholic club, founded for the working and lower middle-class youth of the great Mediterranean port by the saintly Father Allemand.

When Dom Chautard describes his experience of this really vital and supernatural brand of Catholic Action in the *Soul of the Apostolate* he is referring to a later visit to Fr. Allemand's club, after his ordination.

But indeed it may be said that Dom Chautard's vocation, and the *Soul of the Apostolate* itself are both to be traced to Fr. Allemand's club, at Marseilles.

If this youth-club had been one of those more or less timid compromises with modern notions that make so much Catholic Action seem like no more than a Y.M.C.A. run by a couple of priests, Dom Chautard would have probably ended by exporting nitrates from Chile. But here he found something more than third-rate amateur dramatics and the atmosphere of a secular social club. This was more than a tame and sheepish attempt to rival the attractions of the dance hall and the *café* by vainly trying to beat them at their own game of pleasing and entertaining human nature. There was something more, something that appealed to a much deeper and more urgent and more vital necessity: faith, supernatural charity, a deep and simple and unbreakable solidarity among souls united, as he was to discover, in Christ. And, as a result of all this, he began to taste "that peace which the world cannot give."

It was when he was kneeling in prayer, one day, in the chapel of the club, at the tomb of its saintly founder, that he received the grace of his vocation to religion.

He countered the violent and embittered opposition of his father's *bourgeois* hatred of religious orders, by a barefoot pilgrimage up the stony Alpine roads to Our Lady's Mountain Shrine at Laus, and in answer to his prayers, he was admitted as a postulant to the Trappist Abbey of Aiguebelle, near the Rhone, north of Avignon, in 1877.

Here he began to learn, with inexpressible joy, how to live

the contemplative life as it had been practiced for centuries according to the Rule of St. Benedict and the Usages of the Cistercians. He began to live the life of a White Monk, that life of obscurity, obedience, silence, poverty, solitude, hidden in the "secret of God's face," that is, of His presence and of His will. But it is above all, a life of ceaseless praise.

Dom Gabriel, the abbot of this ancient monastery, was a friend of the great Benedictine Dom Guéranger and he stressed the liturgical character of the Cistercian life above all. That is one reason why a most valuable section of the *Soul of the Apostolate* is the one devoted to the liturgical life. Surely there is nothing more fundamental and nothing that is more closely interconnected with Dom Chautard's conception of Catholic Action as a reproduction of the life of the early Christians: and it was the earliest ages, especially the Patristic age, that were the most purely liturgical and, as we see from the writings of the Fathers, the fullest of pure charity, based on sacrifice, without which Catholic Action is a mockery.

But like so many White Monks before him, like St. Bernard and St. Peter of Tarentaise, Jean-Baptiste Chautard was not destined to taste for long the unmixed joys of contemplation. He was not yet solemnly professed, being still in the midst of his studies, and just ordained deacon, when Aiguebelle was faced with complete ruin.

Dom Gabriel had had some opportunity to estimate the young monk's practical ability, since Fr. Jean-Baptiste had been serving for some time as guest-master. The abbot took the bold step of sending him to Paris to try and use his ingenuity to save his community. But all Fr. Chautard's native ability and eloquence and learning and economics proved useless. Finally he threw himself down in prayer at the shrine of Our Lady of Victories. When, a half hour later, he emerged

into the street, a stranger came up to him saying: "Are you not a Trappist? What brings you to Paris, Father? Can I be of any assistance to you?" The rest of the story can be guessed. Aiguebelle was saved. And Dom Chautard had his first real practical experience of the relative worth of natural activity, and activity aided by, and based on prayer.

The rest of the story of his life is a catalogue of activities that might appall a member of the most active Order in the Church.

After directing, as cellarer, the rebuilding of practically the whole monastery of Aiguebelle and the establishment of a chocolate factory there to provide a little revenue, he became abbot of Chambarand near Grenoble.

After the reunion of the various Trappist congregations in 1892 he was commissioned by the Abbot General, Dom Sebastian Wyart, to see to the repurchase of the old Mother House of the Cistercian Order, Cîteaux, which he bought and made ready for occupancy. When Dom Sebastian moved into the Mother House, one of the most important abbeys of the Order, Sept-Fons, needed a new abbot. Dom Chautard was elected.

He made use of his right to refuse, but when Dom Sebastian appealed to the Pope, Leo XIII expressed his desire that Dom Chautard accept, and he yielded to the will of God.

Thus he became abbot of a house at once important and impoverished, and responsible for daughterhouses not only in France and Belgium, but in China, Japan, Palestine, and Australia. Soon he was to add another in Brazil. And the constitutions of the Order require that all such houses be often visited by their Father Immediate, though obviously he could not visit them all each year in person.

In 1901, when one of the frequent attacks against the

Church burst out again in France, Dom Chautard was chosen to represent the Cistercians of the Strict Observance in Paris. He put up such a good fight that Clemenceau, who was no friend of the Church, was nevertheless impressed with his sincerity and fearlessness, and the Order at large was spared. Others were by no means so fortunate.

During the First World War, besides his frequent visits to the monks who had been conscripted and sent to the front, Dom Chautard gave shelter at Sept-Fons to a community of Belgian Cistercians, another community from Palestine, the orphans from an asylum at Arras, and the inmates of an old men's home.

At the same time, Dom Chautard added to this a much more important work of mercy in the spiritual order. A magazine for French priests, conscripted and sent to the front, directed by him, attained such popularity and influence that it was continued with even greater fruit in the difficult period of readjustment that followed the war's end. At that time, these priests, exposed to great spiritual dangers by the moral and physical disintegration which they had seen at such close range, and by the unsettled state of the society to which they returned, needed nothing so much as the consolations and medicine of a doctrine like Dom Chautard's, which placed the greatest emphasis on the one source of all our strength: God's grace, obtained in ever greater abundance by a life of prayer and mortification.

No one was better qualified to help these priests adjust themselves to their difficult situation, and no one was better equipped to train them as good soldiers of Christ, in the active ministry, than this contemplative abbot who had been compelled, as it were, by Providence, to learn from experience the fruitfulness of an active life that had its roots deep in prayer and penance.

But Dom Chautard had long since arrived at the conclusions to which he was now giving his maturest expression.

In the persecution of the Church in France, under Clemenceau, in the early days of the century, Dom Chautard's keen eye had discovered a glaring inconsistency in the reaction of a certain type of Catholic leader. He observed that some priests, some organizers of Catholic Action, imagined that they could fight political enemies with more or less worldly and political weapons. In defending the Church against state persecution, they thought the most important thing was to gain and preserve political and social power. They believed that these gains could best be consolidated by a great material expansion. They expended all their efforts in running newspapers, holding conventions, publishing pamphlets and magazines, and above all, they measured the growth of Catholic life by the number of new school buildings, new Church buildings, new hospital buildings, new orphanages, new social centers. . . . As if the Church of God were built exclusively of bricks and mortar!

Such apostles tended to congratulate themselves when they had raised large sums of money, or when their Churches were filled with great throngs of people, without reference to what might be going on in the souls of all those who were present.

To the eyes of the Cistercian Abbot, a man who had learned his wisdom close to God, in the silence of the cloister, before the Tabernacle, there was a deep-seated and subtly pernicious error in all this. Were these the means to be emphasized in the defense of the King Whose Kingdom is not of this world, and Who said: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."¹

1. *Matt.* 6:33.

Buildings, newspapers, meetings, conventions, all these things were important, vitally important. But they were not the one essential thing. And those who had become entirely absorbed in this work of more or less material growth, seemed to have lost sight of the fact that the Church is built of *living stones*. It is built of *saints*. And saints are made only by the grace of God and the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, not by speeches and publicity and campaigns which are all doomed to sterility without the essential means of *prayer and mortification*.

Dom Chautard saw, no doubt, that all this came from the subtle infection of Modernism and kindred heresies, bred of contact with a purely materialistic and secular culture. And he, like the saintly Pontiff under whose reign he was then living, saw that the only remedy was a return to the fundamentals of Christian Doctrine in all the power and beauty of their traditional presentation. The only thing that could save the Church was to base all work of reconstruction on the solid foundation of the Gospel as presented in the purity of Catholic Doctrine.

Consequently, Dom Chautard brought out, in 1907, a little pamphlet entitled "*L'Apostolat des Catechismes et de la Vie Interieure*" ("*The Apostolate of Catechism and the Interior Life*"). The title is self-explanatory. More important than all the methods based on modern publicity and display was the old traditional Christian technique of the formation of saints by personal contact and the teaching by word and example, in the charity of Christ. And the most vitally necessary thing in the regrowth of Christian life in countries where the Church was subject to state opposition and interference, was the solid and systematic teaching of the basic truths of our Faith by men and women deeply imbued with the interior life.

It was this little pamphlet that first presented the arguments that form the cornerstone of the present volume, and it was on this foundation that the holy abbot proceeded to build when his book was acclaimed on all sides by Catholic leaders, priests, bishops, and cardinals. The result was the first edition of *The Soul of the Apostolate*, which became one of the favorite spiritual books of Catholic priests, religious, and even laymen, in our time.

Not until after the First World War, however, did the book reach its present size, with the addition of the valuable sections on the Liturgical Life and Custody of the Heart. In its final form, it has been translated into all the most important languages of the world, and its multiple editions have run into many hundreds of thousands of copies.

Far from losing any of its popularity and usefulness, the *Soul of the Apostolate* recommends itself with ever more urgency in our time, when the world is barely recovering from the most frightful social cataclysm in the history of man, with no prospect of anything brighter in the future, if men do not learn to turn their steps in the directions pointed out in these pages: the path that was first shown to men by the incarnate Son of God.

What was Dom Chautard's own interior life? His book itself tells us enough on that score. In it we see the reflection of his own soul, a strong and simple faith and indomitable will to serve God in all things, profound and uninterrupted union with the Indwelling Trinity, an unconquerable love of Christ and of His Immaculate Mother: all these elements kept this sane and prudent and ardent priest on the safe and direct road to heaven, steering clear of the two equally noxious extremes of quietism (which he characterized as "perfumed jelly") and the heresy of works whose obstreperous addicts he

condemned, characterizing them as “the heavyweights” (*les champions de boxe*).

The life of Dom Chautard was a life of labor, of sacrifice, in which perhaps the greatest sacrifice was to be constantly out of his beloved cloister, separated from his monastic community and above all from the delights of the liturgical life as lived from day to day by the Cistercian monks in their choir, which is the court of Jesus and Mary, the anteroom of heaven. In his later years, he was persecuted by ill-health, and spent many nights without sleep, in between his days of arduous work for his Order and for souls. But all this, far from breaking his morale and leading him into the morass of self-pitying discouragement, only intensified his union with God. What was his secret? A deep interior life, a profound and simple spirit of faith which was able to see God’s will in all things—a charity, indeed, which was hungry, avid for that will, under whatsoever form it presented itself to him.

If there is one concept that is capable of summing up Dom Chautard’s spirituality, it is one which is sometimes seen written, most appropriately, over the doors of Cistercian monasteries: “GOD ALONE.” Not contemplation, not action, not works, not rest, not this or that particular thing, but God in everything, God in anything, God in His will, God in other men, God present in his own soul. To do whatever God willed, to suffer whatever He willed, that was enough for Dom Chautard, because all he asked was the opportunity to give himself, to give his will, utterly, without recall, to the infinite Wisdom and Love Who created and redeemed us all.

It is the spirit of St. Bernard, and the spirit of the White Monks. It is the spirit of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

It is the spirit in which these pages were written.

WORDS OF POPE PIUS X

Pius X, in an audience granted in 1908 to Msgr. Cloutier, Bishop of Three Rivers, Canada, addressed the following words to the Bishop, who was laying before His Holiness his many projects for the good of his diocese:

“And now, my dear Son, if you desire that God should bless your apostolate and make it fruitful, undertake everything for His glory, saturate yourself and your devoted fellow-workers with the spirit of Jesus Christ, animating yourself and them with an intense interior lift. To this end, I can offer you no better guide than ‘The Soul of the Apostolate,’ by Dom Chautard, Cistercian Abbot. I warmly recommend this book to you, as I value it very highly, and have myself made it my bedside book.”

AUTOGRAPH LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XV

to Dom J. B. Chautard, Abbot of the Trappist Monastery of Notre Dame de Sept-Fons, upon the receipt of his work entitled “L’Ame de Tout Apostolat.”

Dearly Beloved Son:

We congratulate you sincerely upon having brought out so clearly the absolute necessity of the interior life for those engaged in good works, a life so necessary for the success of their ministry.

Expressing a wish that this work in which are found gathered together doctrinal lessons and practical advice suited to the needs of our times may continue to spend and do good.

We send with all Our heart to its esteemed author an affectionate Apostolic Blessing.

Given at the Vatican, March 18, 1915.

BENEDICT PP XV

OTHER TESTIMONIALS

His Eminence Cardinal VICO sent, along with the letter of the Sovereign Pontiff, the following lines:

I hasten to send you herewith the Parchment that our Holy Father, Pope BENEDICT XV, had kindly entrusted to me to transmit to you.

You will read in this revered autograph letter the great praise that His Holiness gives to your valuable book *L'Ame de Tout Apostolat*. The Holy Father has read this book with deep satisfaction.

Already PIUS X of holy memory had entrusted me with the care of expressing his warm congratulations to the pious prelate who translated your book into Spanish.

From His Eminence Cardinal SEVIN,

Your book is a golden book. I have read it eagerly. Never has Pius X met with a commentator more pious, more learned, more eloquent, more practical on the thoughts with which he has filled his Exhortation to the Clergy and twenty other Encyclicals.

You may be sure that I have made this treasure known around me. Your book is used in the spiritual readings of both my seminaries. To Bishops and to a number of priests I have expressed a sincere admiration for your work.

*From His Eminence Cardinal MERCIER,
Archbishop of Mechlin*

The events in which I have just taken part did not allow me sufficient freedom of mind and the leisure that I should have had to read your book with the attention which it deserves and to fix my mind on the sublime thoughts that you have set forth with your apostolic ardour.

On looking over your book, I have been struck by the

resemblance of your teaching with the main subject of a retreat that I preached in 1910 to the clergy of my diocese.

From His Eminence Cardinal VIVES,

It is no small merit to have been able in your excellent work on the interior life and the Apostolate to condense doctrine and practical methods. . . .

*From His Eminence Cardinal FISCHER,
Archbishop of Cologne*

I fully approve of what you have written with so much learning, so much experience in this matter and so much unction.

*From His Eminence Cardinal AMETTE,
Archbishop of Paris*

I read with much edification your book: *L'Ame de Tout Apostolat*, and I will be happy to recommend it to our priests and to zealous persons who devote themselves to good works. In Paris, especially, where the exterior work of the apostolate is so absorbing, it is of great importance to be always animated by that sap of the interior life which can alone assure its fecundity.

*From His Eminence Cardinal LUCON,
Archbishop of Reims*

I appreciate the truth of the thesis which you develop and completely approve of it. . . .

*From His Eminence Cardinal ARCOVERDE,
Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro*

To put on Jesus Christ, to live the life of Jesus Christ, is the soul of every apostolate as you say in your excellent book. . . .

*From His Excellency D. PENON,
Bishop of Moulins*

Fresh and profound thoughts, impressive comments on several well known texts and on new texts taken from Holy Scripture and the Fathers, striking examples, most of them collected and vouched for by yourself in the good works with which you have been intimately connected, in fine and above all, the personal note, with which you show forth the fecundity of an apostolate, which results from the union of zeal and *piety by the Eucharistic and liturgical life*, add a more powerful attraction and assure a fuller efficacy to what you have already said so well in the first development of your fundamental thesis.

Priests, religious, both men and women, lay people interested in the apostolate, will have no pretext for doing without this *vade mecum*. *Zealous souls* especially may distribute it widely so that it may be for everyone's use, not for reading once only, but *habitually*, so that they may go back to it, employ it for *meditation*, that it may serve for annual and monthly retreats and also for the training of *seminarists* or *novices*. . . .

*From His Excellency DR. MARRE,
titular Bishop of Const., Abbot General
of the Reformed Cistercians*

Nothing has pleased me more than to hear about the new edition of your excellent book, "*L'Ame de Tout Apostolat*."

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THE SOUL *of the*
APOSTOLATE

PROLOGUE

EX QUO OMNIA,
PER QUEM OMNIA,
IN QUO OMNIA¹

O God, infinitely good and great, wonderful indeed are the truths that faith lays open to us, concerning the life which Thou leadest within Thyself: and these truths dazzle us.

Father all holy, Thou dost contemplate Thyself forever in the Word, Thy perfect image—Thy Word exults in rapt joy at Thy beauty—and, Father and Son, from Your joint ecstasy, *leaps forth* the strong flame of love, the Holy Spirit.

You alone, O adorable Trinity, are the interior life, perfect, superabundant, and infinite.

Goodness unlimited, You desire to spread this, Your own inner life, everywhere, outside Yourself. You speak: and Your works spring forth out of nothingness, to declare Your perfections and to sing Your glory.

Between You and the dust quickened by Your breath, there is a deep abyss: and this, Your Holy Spirit wishes to bridge. Thus He will find a way of satisfying His immense need to love, to give Himself.

1. Liturgy. Fifth antiphon of Matins for the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity—Quoted from *1 Cor.* 8:6.

And therefore He calls forth, from Your bosom, the decree that *we become divine*. Wonder of wonders! This clay, fashioned by Your hands, will have the power to be *deified*, and share in Your eternal happiness.

Your Word offers Himself for the fulfillment of this work. And He is made flesh, that we may become gods.²

And yet, O Word, Thou hast not left the bosom of Thy Father. It is there that Thy essential life subsists, and it is from this source that the marvels of Thy apostolate are to flow.

O Jesus, Emmanuel, Thou dost hand over to Thy apostles Thy Gospel, Thy Cross, Thy Eucharist, and givest them the mission to go forth and beget for Thy Father, sons of adoption.

And then Thou dost return, ascending, to Thy Father.

Thine, henceforth, O Holy Spirit, is the care of sanctifying and directing the Mystical Body of the God-man.³

Thou deignest to take unto Thyself fellow-workers, in Thy function of bringing, from the Head, divine life into the members.

Burning with Pentecostal fires, they will go forth to sow broadcast in the minds of all, the word that enlightens, and in all hearts the grace that enkindles. Thus will they impart to men that divine life of which Thou art the fullness.

* * *

O Divine Fire, stir up in all those who have part in Thy apostolate, the flames that transformed those fortunate retreatments in the Upper Room. Then they will be no longer mere preachers of dogma or moral theology, but men living to

2. *Factus est homo ut homo fieret deus* (St. Augustine, Sermon 2 de Nativ.).

3. *Deus, cujus Spiritu totum corpus sanctificatur et regitur*. Liturgy.

transfuse the Blood of God into the souls of men.

Spirit of Light, imprint upon their minds, in characters that can never be erased, this truth: *that their apostolate will be successful only in the measure that they themselves live that supernatural inner life of which Thou art the sovereign PRINCIPLE and Jesus Christ the SOURCE.*

O infinite Charity, make their wills *burn with thirst* for the interior life. Penetrate and flood their hearts with Thy sweetness and strength, and show them that, even here on this earth, there is no *real happiness* except in this life of imitation and sharing in *Thine own life* and in that of the *Heart of Jesus* in the bosom of the Father of all mercy and all kindness.

* * *

O Mary Immaculate, Queen of apostles, deign to bless these simple pages. Grant that all who read them may really *understand* that, if it please God to use their activity as an ordinary instrument of His Providence, in pouring out His heavenly riches upon the souls of men, this activity, if it is to produce any results, will have to *participate, somehow, in the nature of the Divine Act* as Thou didst behold it in the bosom of God when He, to Whom we owe the power of calling thee our Mother, became incarnate in the virginal womb.

PART ONE

ACTIVE WORKS AND THE INTERIOR LIFE: WHAT THEY MEAN

1. GOD WANTS GOOD WORKS AND, THEREFORE, HE WANTS ZEALOUS ACTION

Sovereign liberality is inseparable from the divine Nature. God is infinite goodness. Goodness seeks nothing except to *give itself* and to communicate the riches which it enjoys.

The mortal life of Our Lord was nothing else but a continual manifestation of this inexhaustible liberality. The Gospel shows us the Redeemer scattering along His way the treasures of love of a Heart eager to draw all men to truth and to life.

This apostolic flame has been passed on by Jesus to His Church, which is the gift of His love, which diffuses His life, manifests His truth, and shines with the splendor of His sanctity. Burning with the selfsame love, the Mystic Spouse of Christ carries on, down through the ages, the apostolic work of her divine Model.

How admirable the plan, the universal law laid down by

Providence, *that it is through men, that men* are to find out the way to salvation.¹ Jesus Christ alone has shed the Blood that redeems the world. Alone, too, He might have put its power to work, and acted upon souls directly, as He does in the Holy Eucharist. But He wanted to have others co-operate in the distribution of His graces. Why? No doubt His divine Majesty demanded that it be so, but His loving affection for men urged Him no less. And if it is seemly for the most exalted king to govern, more often than not, through ministers, what condescension it is for God to deign to give poor creatures a share in His work and in His glory!

Born, upon the Cross, from the pierced side of the Savior, the Church, by its apostolic ministry, carries on the bountiful and redeeming action of the man-God. This ministry, willed by Jesus Christ, becomes the essential factor in the diffusion of the Church among all nations, and the ordinary instrument of its great achievements.

In the front rank of this apostolate, stands the *clergy*, with its hierarchy forming the main body of the army of Christ, a clergy distinguished by so many holy, zealous bishops and priests, and covered with honor and glory by the recent canonization of the saint who was Curé of Ars.

Next to the official clergy, have risen, since the beginnings of Christianity, companies of *volunteers*, shock-troops, whose continued and abundant growth will always be one of the clearest signs of the vitality of the Church.

First of all, in the earliest centuries, came the contemplative orders, whose ceaseless prayer and fierce penances were

1. *Ad communem legem id pertinet qua Deus providentissimus, uti homines plerumque fere per homines salvandos decrevit . . . ut nimirum, quemadmodum Chrysostomus ait, per homines, a Deo discamus.* (Letter of Pope Leo XIII to Cardinal Gibbons, January 22, 1899.)

such a powerful aid in the conversion of the pagan world. In the Middle Ages, the preaching orders sprang up, with the mendicant and military orders, and those vowed to the ransom of captives in the powers of infidels. Finally, modern times have seen the birth of crowds of teaching institutes, missionary societies, congregations of all sorts, whose mission is to spread abroad every kind of spiritual and material good.

Then, too, at every stage of her history, the Church has received valuable help from the whole body of the faithful, like those fervent Catholics, whose name today is legion, tireless workers, ardent souls who know how to unite their forces and to devote, without stint, to the cause of our common mother, their time, abilities, and fortune, often sacrificing their liberty or their very lives.

A wonderful and encouraging sight, indeed, this providential harvest of works springing up just when they are most needed and in precisely the way that the situation seems to demand! Church history clearly proves that each new need, each new emergency to be faced, has invariably meant the appearance of the institution that the circumstances required.

And so, in our own day, we see a multitude of works that were scarcely even heard of, a generation ago, rise up in opposition to evils of the most serious kind: Catechism classes for first communicants and converts, as well as for abandoned children, all types of Catholic societies, sodalities, and confraternities, laymen's retreats for young and old of both sexes, Apostleship of Prayer, the Work of the Propagation of the Faith, Catholic action in student and military circles, Catholic press association and other works of both general and local usefulness. All these forms of apostolate are called into being by the spirit that burned in the soul of St. Paul: "But I most

gladly will spend and be spent for your souls,”² the spirit that wishes to spread abroad, everywhere, the benefits of the Blood of Christ.

May these humble pages go out to the soldiers of Christ, who, consumed as they are with zeal and ardor for their noble mission, might be exposed, because of the very activity they display, to the danger of *not being, above all, men of interior life!* For such men, when the day comes for this deficiency in their lives, to be punished, by failures no one seems able to explain and by serious spiritual collapse, may well be tempted to give up the fight and retire, in discouragement, behind the lines.

The thoughts developed in this book have helped us, ourselves, to fight against an excessive exteriorization through good works. May they help others, also, to escape such a mishap, and lead the stream of their courageous action into better channels. May they show that we must never leave the God of works, for the works of God, and that St. Paul’s: “Woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel”³ does not entitle us to forget: “What does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?”⁴

May these modest pages also reach those fathers and mothers of families who do not consider the *Introduction to the Devout Life* out of date, Christian husbands and wives who feel obligated to an apostolate towards one another as well as towards their children, in order to form them in the love and imitation of the Savior. For then they will better understand

2. *Ego autem libentissime impendam et superimpendar ipse pro animabus vestris* (2 Cor. 12:15).

3. *Vae mihi si non evangelizavero* (1 Cor. 9:16).

4. *Quid prodest homini si mundum universum lucretur, animae vero suae detrimentum patiatur?* (Matt. 16:26).

the need not only of a pious, but of an interior life, if their zeal is to have any success, and if they are to fill their homes with the unction of the spirit of Jesus Christ, and with that unchanging peace which in the face of every trial will always be a characteristic of the truly Christian family.

2. GOD WILLS THAT THE LIFE-PRINCIPLE OF OUR WORK BE CHRIST HIMSELF

Science is proud of its immense success, and justly so. And yet there is one thing which always has been, and always will be, impossible to it: to create life, to produce, from a chemical laboratory, a grain of corn, a larva. The wholesale discomfiture of the defenders of spontaneous generation shows us, clearly enough, how little there is in these claims. God reserves for Himself the power of creating life.

In the vegetable and animal order, living beings can grow and multiply: but still, their fecundity only operates under definite conditions laid down by the Creator. But as soon as there is question of intellectual life, God reserves this to Himself, and He is the One who directly creates the reasoning soul. And yet there is one other realm which he guards even more jealously still, that of *Supernatural life*, which flows from the divine life communicated to the humanity of the Incarnate Word.

*Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, Per Ipsum et cum Ipso et in Ipso.*⁵

The Incarnation and Redemption establish Jesus as the Source, and the *only Source*, of this divine life which all men

5. Liturgy.

are called upon to share. The essential activity of the Church consists in spreading this life through the Sacraments, Prayer, Preaching, and all other works connected with these.

God does nothing except through His Son. "All things were made by Him and without Him was nothing made that was made."⁶ True as this is in the natural order, how much more so is it in the supernatural order, when it is a question of imparting His inner life, and causing men to share in His own nature, making them children of God.

"I am come that they may have life. In Him was life. I am the life."⁷ What precision there is in these words! And what light, in the parable of the vine and the branches, in which the Master develops this truth! With what insistence he strives to impress upon the minds of the Apostles the fundamental principle that HE ALONE, JESUS, IS THE LIFE, and the consequence that, in order to *share* in that life and *communicate* it to others, they must be grafted on to the God-man.

Men, called to the honor of working with the Savior in transmitting this divine life to souls, ought to consider themselves mere channels, whose function it is to draw from this one and only source.

Failure, on the part of the apostle, to realize this principle, and the illusion that he could produce the slightest trace of supernatural life without borrowing every bit of it from Jesus Christ, would lead us to believe that his ignorance of theology was equaled only by his stupid self-conceit.

If the apostle, while recognizing in theory that the Redeemer is the primary cause of all divine life, were to forget this truth

6. *Omnia per Ipsum facta sunt, et sine Ipso factum est nihil quod factum est* (Joan. 1:3).

7. *Veni ut vitam habeant. In Ipso vita erat. Ego sum vita* (Joan. 10:10; 1:4; 14:6).

in his actions and, blinded by insane presumption, were to insult Jesus Christ by relying on his own powers, it would be a lesser disorder than the preceding, but one just as insufferable in the sight of God.

To reject the truth, or to ignore it in one's actions, always constitutes an *intellectual disorder* in doctrine or in practice. It is the denial of a principle on which our conduct ought to be based. Obviously, the disorder will be still further aggravated if the clear light of truth is obscured and obstructed, in the heart of the active laborer, by his opposition, through sin or voluntary lukewarmness, to the God of all light.

Now for a man, in his practical conduct, to go about his active works as if Jesus were not his one end only life-principle, is what Cardinal Mermillod has called the "HERESY OF GOOD WORKS." He uses this expression to stigmatize the apostle who so far forgets himself as to overlook his secondary and subordinate role, and look only to his own personal activity and talents as a basis for apostolic success. Is this not, in practice, a *denial of a great part of the Tract on Grace*? This conclusion is one that appalls us, at first sight. And yet a little thought will show us that it is only too true.

HERESY IN GOOD WORKS! Feverish activity taking the place of God; grace ignored; human pride trying to thrust Jesus from His throne; supernatural life, the power of prayer, the economy of our redemption relegated, at least in practice, to the realm of pure theory: all this portrays no merely imaginary situation, but one which the diagnosis of souls shows to be very common though in various degrees, in this age of naturalism, when men judge, above all, by appearances, and act as though success were primarily a matter of skillful organization.